

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 002527

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARN, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, INR/NESA, R/MR,  
I/GNEA, B/BXN, B/BRN, NEA/PPD  
USAID/ANE/MEA  
LONDON FOR GOLDRICH  
PARIS FOR O'FRIEL  
USCINCCENT/CCPA, USCENTCOM REAR MACDILL AFB FL  
NICOSIA FOR ILMG  
STATE PASS TO AID

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: JORDAN: MEDIA REACTION ON THE OPERATIONS IN NETANYA AND GAZA, PM'S VISIT TO PNA, AND VP CHENEY'S INTERVIEW, IRAQ

#### SUMMARY

NEWS REPORTS IN JORDAN'S DAILIES ON MAY 20 DEALT WITH THREE MAIN STORIES: THE BOMBINGS IN ISRAEL, WHICH WERE DESCRIBED AS "COMMANDO OPERATIONS," PRIME MINISTER ABUL RAGHEB'S VISIT TO RAMALLAH IN WHICH HE HIGHLIGHTED JORDAN'S SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN REFORMS AND FOR THE CREATION OF A PALESTINIAN STATE, AND VP CHENEY'S INTERVIEW WITH FOX NEWS IN WHICH HE WARNED OF "NEW ATTACKS AGAINST THE U.S." AND ASSERTED THAT THE RETURN OF THE INSPECTORS DOES NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM WITH IRAQ.

EDITORIAL COMMENTARIES EXPRESSED DIVERSE OPINIONS ON THE ISSUE OF PALESTINIAN REFORMS, BUT ALL AGREED THAT THE AMERICAN ISRAELI CALLS FOR REFORMS ARE MADE IN BAD FAITH, AND THAT THEY ARE AN ATTEMPT TO COMPLETE THE ISRAELI MILITARY OPERATION'S AIM TO ELIMINATE THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY. OTHER COMMENTATORS WARNED THAT DESPITE IRAQ'S ACCEPTANCE OF UN DEMANDS, U.S. PREPARATIONS FOR AN "AGGRESSION" AGAINST IT WILL CONTINUE.

#### NEWS REPORTS

JORDANIAN DAILIES ON ALL LED WITH REPORTS ON THE BOMBINGS IN NETANYA AND GAZA. THE HEADLINES DESCRIBED THE BOMBINGS AS "OPERATIONS" OR "COMMANDO OPERATIONS," WHILE INDEPENDENT, MASS-APPEAL ARABIC DAILY AL-ARAB AL-YAWM SAID: "HAMAS STRIKES AGAIN IN NETANYA."

DAILIES ALSO GAVE PROMINENT COVERAGE TO PRIME MINISTER ALI ABUL RAGHEB'S VISIT TO RAMALLAH, WITH HEADLINES HIGHLIGHTING JORDAN'S SUPPORT FOR THE PALESTINIAN REFORMS AND THE QUEST TO ESTABLISH AN INDEPENDENT STATE.

JORDANIAN DAILIES ALSO REPORTED ON THEIR FRONT PAGES VP CHENEY'S INTERVIEW WITH FOX NEWS, HIGHLIGHTING TWO ELEMENTS: HIS ASSERTION THAT THE RETURN OF THE WEAPONS INSPECTORS DOES NOT ELIMINATE THE PROBLEM WITH IRAQ, AND HIS WARNING OF MORE "ATTACKS AGAINST THE U.S."

#### EDITORIAL COMMENTARIES

-- THE BATTLE OF PALESTINIAN REFORMS  
IMPORTANT DAILY COLUMNIST BASSEM SAKEJHA WROTE IN CENTER-LEFT, INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-DUSTOUR ON MAY 20: "CORRUPTION IN THE PNA IS NOT A SECRET, AND WHEN THE PALESTINIANS ELECTED THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, THEY DID NOT DO SO IN PERPETUITY. BUT QUESTIONS OF REFORM ARE NOW RAISED NOT FROM WITHIN, BUT BY THE ENEMY AND HIS ALLY, AS IF THE BATTLE WERE NOT ABOUT THE CHURCH OF NATIVITY AND JENIN, BUT ABOUT THE DATE OF ELECTIONS AND THE SIZE OF THE CABINET. THE PROBLEM IS THAT THE PALESTINIAN PRESIDENCY CONSIDERS THE TIMING OF THE ELECTIONS TO BE A CARD TO PRESSURE THE ISRAELIS AND AMERICANS, NOT A PROCESS OF REAL REFORM. WE ALL KNOW THAT THE AMERICAN TALK ABOUT REFORM IS IN BAD FAITH, BUT THIS DOES NOT JUSTIFY DELAYING THIS STEP, WHICH WOULD BE THE FIRST IN BUILDING A DEMOCRATIC STATE. TEL AVIV AND WASHINGTON WANT THEM AS A WAY OF BRINGING IN A PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP THAT WOULD BE LAX REGARDING PALESTINIAN NATIONAL ISSUES, BUT EXPERIENCE HAS SHOWN THAT THEY WILL NOT SUCCEED BECAUSE THE PALESTINIAN STREET ALWAYS HAS THE MEANS TO CORRECT POLITICAL ORIENTATIONS."

-- THEY CALL FOR LIBERATING ANDALUSIA  
TAHER AL-ADWAN, CHIEF EDITOR OF INDEPENDENT, MASS-APPEAL ARABIC DAILY AL-ARAB AL-YAWM WROTE ON MAY 20:

"MANY THINGS HAVE CHANGED SINCE SHARON UNLEASHED HIS TROOPS TO REOCCUPY THE LIBERATED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES AND REACHED THE DOORS OF THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE, WITH UNPRECEDENTED AMERICAN SUPPORT. NOW THE TALK IS ABOUT THE PREROGATIVES OF THE PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT, AND HIS PALESTINIAN CRITICS JUSTIFY THEMSELVES BY CLAIMING THAT THEY MAKE CALLS FOR REFORM. BUT EVERYONE REMEMBERS THAT THE ORIGIN OF THESE CALLS WERE PRESIDENT BUSH AND GENERAL SHARON, AND THEIR CALL FOR 'REFORM' IS TO COMPLETE THE PRESSURE THAT THE MILITARY OPERATION STARTED. ARAFAT NOW RESISTS ATTEMPTS TO ELIMINATE HIM AND THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY. HIS CRITICS, THEREFORE, ARE LIKE THOSE WHO TOLL THE BELLS CALLING FOR PRAYER WHILE THE ENEMY TROOPS SCALE THE WALLS OF THEIR CITY. WE FIND OURSELVES LOOKING AT A CARICATURE BEST DESCRIBED BY PALESTINIAN POET MAHMOUD DARWISH IN A FAMOUS POEM, IN WHICH HE SAID: 'THEY CALL FOR LIBERATING ANDALUSIA WHEN ALEPPO IS UNDER SIEGE.'"

-- LOOKING FOR PRETEXTS  
"FORMER UNDER-SECRETARY OF CULTURE MOHAMMAD NAJI AMAYREH WROTE IN SEMI-OFFICIAL INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-RAI ON MAY 20: "AMERICAN THREATS OF A MILITARY STRIKE AGAINST IRAQ HAVE NOT CEASED ALTHOUGH IRAQ HAS ACCEPTED THE NEW SANCTIONS REGIME AND IT DID NOT OPPOSE THE RETURN OF THE INSPECTORS, WHILE LOOKING FOR WAYS TO PREVENT THEM FROM BECOMING SPIES FOR THE U.S. THE U.S. AND ITS ALLY BRITAIN ARE NOW LOOKING FOR PRETEXTS FOR THIS AGGRESSION, AND THEY WILL PROBABLY FIND SOME, BECAUSE PREPARATIONS FOR THE AGGRESSION ONLY WAIT FOR A MORE APPROPRIATE MOMENT TO LAUNCH IT. THIS HESITATION DOES NOT MEAN THAT THEY HAVE RULED OUT MILITARY ACTION. HOWEVER, AMERICA WILL FAIL TO ACHIEVE ITS AIMS FROM THIS STRIKE, WHICH WILL ONLY WEAKEN U.S. SUPPORTERS IN THE ARAB WORLD AND STRENGTHEN THOSE WHO CALL FOR SEARCHING FOR ALTERNATIVE FRIENDS." GNEHM